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INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 3360
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 6721
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 9417
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY 3314
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 0311
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 0496
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4240
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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV PREL PE
SUBJECT: APOYO POLL GIVES CLEAR SECOND ROUND LEAD TO ALAN
GARCIA

REF: A. LIMA 1719

- 1B. LIMA 1681
- 1C. LIMA 1653
- 1D. LIMA 1637

Sensitive But Unclassified, Please Handle Accordingly

11. (U) SUMMARY. A new poll by the Apoyo organization shows APRA's Alan Garcia ahead of UPP candidate Ollanta Humala by 57 to 43 percent. Regionally, Humala leads in the central and southern highlands and in the jungle, but Garcia is solidly ahead in the north and along the coast, and leads by a wide margin in Lima, 64 to 36 percent. When eligible voters were asked in the same poll about their attitudes toward Presidents Chavez of Venezuela and Morales of Bolivia (who have associated themselves with Humala), both rated strong negative perceptions -- so far, Peruvians see these outside efforts to favor Humala as blatant interference in their country's internal politics. END SUMMARY.

GARCIA MOVES STEADILY AHEAD

12. (U) Apoyo, Peru's most prestigious public opinion polling institute, published on 5/7 the results of a nationwide poll it carried out the previous week among 2,000 eligible voters, the first such study done by Apoyo since Ollanta Humala and Alan Garcia were certified as the candidates that would face each other in the second round of presidential voting. Garcia had a clear lead, by a margin of 57 to 43 percent. The poll was in line with two earlier surveys carried out by the Datum organization, which had shown Garcia leading 54 to 46 percent in a study carried out 4/19-21, and widening his lead to 56-44 in a 4/29-5/1 poll. In each case, the spread refers to the proportion of valid votes for each candidate. About 15 percent of voters say they will cast blank or spoiled votes for the second round on 6/4, and 7 to 8 percent say they have not yet made up their minds about who they will vote for.

13. (U) Voter attitudes have shifted markedly since shortly before the first round -- a 4/2 Apoyo poll of a hypothetical second round between Humala and Garcia showed the former barely ahead, 51 to 49. There has also been a significant migration in the important "rejection" index: 50 percent of those polled said they would "definitely" not vote for

Humala, versus 37 percent for Garcia, close to the inverse of results early in the year. Regionally, Garcia is solidly ahead in the north and along the coast, while Humala leads in the central and southern highlands and in the jungle. Lima, with over a third of Peru's voters, favors Garcia by a 64-36 margin.

NO TO OUTSIDE MEDDLING

¶4. (U) Voters were also asked about their attitudes toward Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Bolivian President Evo Morales, both of whom have associated themselves with the Humala campaign. The negative to positive ratio for Chavez was 61 to 17 percent, while the same breakdown for Morales was 41 to 23 percent. Opposition by Peruvians to Chavez and Morales has hardened over time. In a similar Apoyo poll conducted in January, Chavez had a negative/positive ratio of 55 to 25, and Morales a ratio of 20 to 23.

COMMENT

¶5. (SBU) Given the traditional volatility of Peruvian politics, and the fact that the candidates have now agreed to a face-to-face debate, the mood of the electorate could still change prior to the final vote. Garcia seemed to sense this in reacting to Apoyo's polling numbers, saying that APRA's own private surveys indicate a closer race, and calling on his supporters not to be crowing victory too early. Apparently hoping to provoke another Chavista outburst, Garcia also took the opportunity to once again criticize the policies of the Venezuelan President, stating that he seemed determined to destroy Venezuela's relationships with most other Latin nations, and align himself exclusively with Cuba and Bolivia.

¶6. (SBU) The trend in public opinion since the presidential first round indicates that Peruvians are not inclined to seek radical solutions to the country's problems. When a face-off between Garcia and Humala was merely a theoretical possibility a month ago, there was no clear preference for either. Now that there is a forced choice between Garcia, who is tainted by his earlier presidency but clearly pro-democracy, and Humala, with his autocratic, anti-system proposals, Garcia has moved rapidly ahead. Analysts here have also pointed out that Peruvians resent what they see as interference by Presidents Chavez and Morales by coming out so strongly in Humala's favor, actions which seem to have contributed directly to the latter's decline.

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